



Order of Service
13th February 2022

INTROIT TiS 107 verses 1 and 3 Sing praise and thanksgiving

CALL TO WORSHIP

Blessed are those who trust - in God!

We come in trust, to be grounded in God's love.

Blessed are those who hope - in God!

We come in hope, trusting in the One who gives us life.

Blessed are those who delight - in God's Word!

We come to hear God speak, hoping for healing and joy.

Acknowledgement of First Peoples

"We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather today and pay respect to their elder's past, present and emerging."

WELCOME

Opening prayer

You, loving God, are the ground of our being and the river of life;
you both steady our roots and draw them to seek the living waters.

You are like the sunlight enticing us taller and like the breeze rustling our leaves.

You are with us through hard seasons of summer heat,
and in the nights when winter's frost ice the landscape your love warms and sustains us.

You are everything to us.

O let our gratitude be great, let our praise be plentiful,
let our worship be wonder-full!

Through Christ Jesus your ever-living Son. **Amen!**

HYMN TiS 188 Where wide sky rolls down

PRAYER OF ADORATION AND PRAISE

Creator God, we praise you and we adore you.

Our landscape testifies to the beauty of creation, where the great river red gums
are enabled to blossom and bear fruit by drawing their nourishment through their roots.

Our gathering here for worship testifies to the wonder of your care for us,
as you enable our lives to be nourished with Jesus - Life of the world.

You also empower us to blossom and to bear fruit through the gift of your Holy Spirit.

Even in the most arid times of our lives we are strengthened by the knowledge of your presence and your power
growing and blossoming within us.

May this time of worship ground us even deeper in your life and love, O God,
in Jesus' name. Amen



PSALM 1

Happy is the person who does not follow the advice of the wicked

***nor take the way of sinners,
nor sit amongst the scornful.***

His or her delight is in the teaching of the LORD,

meditating on it day and night

Such a person is like a single tree,

planted in the midst of a vast irrigation system;

***it bears fruit in its right time,
and its leaves never wither.***

And their every endeavour is successful.

This is not how it is for the wicked;

rather, they are like chaff which the wind scatters.

And so, the wicked shall not stand in the judgement place,

nor the sinners in the assembly of the godly;

for the LORD watches over the way of the godly person,

but the way of the wicked shall pass away.

Confession and Word of Assurance

When we hoard things and do not share,
forgive us, loving God.

When we think we have it made and do not need others,
forgive us, loving God.

When we laugh at others' misfortune, and say "it serves them right,"
forgive us, loving God.

When we care more about what others think of us, than in doing what is right,
forgive us, loving God.

When we would rather follow our own way than yours,
forgive us, loving God.
(silent prayer)

Blessed are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, but whose delight is in the law of God. Your sins are forgiven. Go and live in God's way.

Thanks be to God!

An Early Word – "Tina the Tree"

Hymn TiS 609 May the mind of Christ my Saviour

**BIBLE READINGS: Jeremiah 17:5-10
Luke 6:17-26**

REFLECTION

Last week we heard Luke's account of Jesus calling his first disciples, including the unexpected huge haul of fish after a night of fruitless fishing. Today our Gospel passage tells the story of Jesus teaching these and more who make up the twelve apostles. This passage from Luke is part of what is called Jesus' Sermon on the Plain, and it closely mirrors Matthew 5-7, which is known as the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew's account, Jesus has been ministering to large crowds of people, and chooses to take some time out, retreating up a hill. The disciples join him and he teaches them, beginning with the nine beatitudes.

In today's gospel passage, Luke has things happening slightly differently. Here we have Jesus and his disciples standing in a level place – a plain – where crowds are pressing in on Jesus, trying to touch him because they know healing power will come from him. Jesus doesn't walk away from them but stays, and looking at his disciples begins teaching them within earshot of the crowd who had come seeking help.



Many of these disciples have literally left everything...jobs, family, a way of life; all in order to join Jesus as his disciples. It is to these disciples that Jesus turns and speaks directly:

Blessed are you. Blessed are you that are poor. Blessed are you who are hungry. Blessed are you who weep. Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you, revile you, or call you evil.

Luke then goes on to pair these blessings with their opposites - four statements about those who might have been thought of as blessed, but who in fact are receivers of woe.

“But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry.

Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.”

There’s a shock here: the things that Jesus describes as being disastrous are precisely the things that most of us aspire to most of the time: being financially secure, well fed, happy, and well regarded by those around us.

In a culture that had always believed that the trappings of success proved that you were a good person blessed by God, Jesus saying “Blessed are the poor and woe to the rich” was unexpected and bewildering.

So what’s going on here?

As he so often does, Jesus is upending our system of values. When he first spoke these words, they would have been every bit as shocking and unthinkable as for many people today. And in his day it wasn’t just understood as the values of society. It was understood in religious terms as the values of God. People always aspire to be prosperous, well fed, happy, respected and popular. But in those days, most people also believed that those things were blessings from God. Prosperity, happiness and popularity were seen as God’s rewards bestowed on those who were good enough to deserve them. So in a culture that had always believed that the trappings of success proved that you were a good person blessed by God, Jesus saying “Blessed are the poor and woe to the rich” was unexpected and bewildering.

There is a tendency, perhaps, to sentimentalise the Beatitudes - to see them as a hazy ideal for living. In fact, they issue a fundamental challenge: where do we set our own happiness - wholly on earthly things - on things that bring short-term contentment, or on spiritual things - those that endure into eternity?

The words of Jeremiah in today’s Old Testament echo very clearly Jesus’ words in the Gospel: those who put their trust in earthly things will find them wanting, but those who place their trust in God will prosper.

The imagery Jeremiah uses is very stark and powerful. The one who looks to the things of the earth becomes like a shrub in the desert. By contrast, the one who trusts in God is like the tree planted close to water - which remains fruitful whatever comes.

Most of us will have experienced times of “dryness” - when we feel drained and life seems barren. We may even have fallen prey to the temptation to build our happiness on material things and a crisis - or simply time - has forced us to realise how unsatisfying they are in the long term.

On the other hand, we may have gone through trials and suffering but found reserves of strength which have sustained us far beyond anything we thought we could endure.

We live in a world in which, increasingly, people are placing their trust in material things - and, increasingly, we meet people who are yearning for something real and satisfying. They may have associated religion with sentimentality and seen it as old-fashioned and dismissed it as a source of enduring joy and encouragement.

Our conviction in the face of our own difficulties can open their eyes to what faith really is - placing our trust in something - or rather Someone - infinitely greater than ourselves. By living through our “droughts” - by stretching our roots deeper into the love and life of God - and “staying green” and alive - we witness to the steadfast love of God which underpins our faith.

Amen

HYMN TiS 644 Safe in the shadow of the Lord



ANNOUNCEMENTS

DEDICATION OF OFFERING

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Compassionate Lord,

You blessed the poor and healed those left to beg for their livelihoods.

And yet we are still surrounded by poverty and financial difficulties.

Support those who face struggles at work, or for whom employment or income is uncertain.

Help us provide for those who beg for their livelihoods today, that they may be cared for, when forced off the streets.

Deliver and heal Your children, loving God.

Abundant God, You blessed the hungry and fed thousands, but famine is still a problem for this world. Worse, starvation is used as a weapon of war, and claims the lives of many thousands of children in conflict zones. Be with those seeking peace or delivering aid to the millions facing starvation today.

Deliver and feed Your children, loving God.

Comforting Lord, You blessed those who wept and consoled those who grieved. Be with those who have lost family and friends in outbreaks of violence and throughout this COVID 19 pandemic, in diverse places and circumstances. Be with us here today when we face loss, grief and disappointment.

Deliver and support Your children, loving God.

All-embracing God, You blessed the broken and the lonely, and you brought them into Your circle of love. You welcomed the excluded and you made time for those whom others told you to ignore. Bless us today, when we are broken and lonely. Bring us into your family of love and prompt us to share your love with those around us: welcoming; including; noticing others' needs.

Deliver and heal Your children, loving God.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

***Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.***

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Amen.

HYMN: TIS 607 Make me a channel of your peace

Blessing

Go now, with your trust in the Lord.

Rejoice in your union with Christ

even when people reject you for it.

And may God raise you to new life with Christ.

May Christ Jesus heal you of all that troubles you.

And may the Holy Spirit nourish you from the deep

and keep you fruitful in all you do.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,

In the name of Christ. Amen.

HYMN TIS 782 Go now in peace

